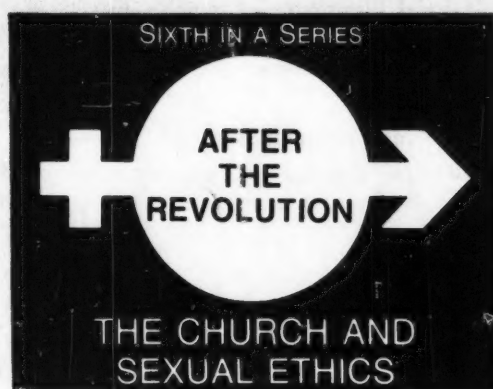

The Christian CENTURY

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"It is clear that violence against women and violence within families is commonplace and that the perpetrators and the victims are ordinary people."

Sexual and Family Violence

LOIS GEHR LIVEZEY

John Bennett on Oxford '37

DAVID McCREARY

**The Peres
Peace Plan**

**Saints of
Common Place**

The Christian CENTURY

An Ecumenical Weekly

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EDITORIALS

The Peres Peace Plan: Battling Extremism

PEACE IN THE Middle East will come too late for Alexander Arad, a 43-year-old Israeli soldier killed by an assailant believed to be a Palestinian. Arad, an Israeli Defense Force reservist on active duty, was stabbed to death while waiting to catch a ride at the Megiddo junction, ten minutes from the Ramot Menashe Kibbutz where he lived with his wife and their four children.

The stabbing is one of the most recent incidents in which IDF soldiers have lost their lives in the continued unrest in Israel and the Occupied Territories. Both Jews and Palestinian Arabs have been victims in the cycle of violence in which radicals on both sides have resorted to isolated killing. Arad's death was especially poignant, coming as it did just a few weeks before U.S. Secretary of State George Shultz stopped in Israel on his way to Moscow. One item on the agenda for Shultz and Israeli leaders was a proposal by Foreign Minister Shimon Peres for an international peace conference.

Peres has been pressing for an international conference over the strong objections of Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir, who has told the U.S. that he didn't want the conference to be the major focus of his talks with Shultz. He opposes a meeting that would include representatives from all the Arab states, permanent members of the United Nations Security Council, and Palestinians.

Peres, whose Labor Party shares power with Shamir's Likud Coalition, "appears to have secured guarantees from [Jordan's] King Hussein that the real negotiating will be in smaller talks between Israel, resident Palestinians, and the bordering states," according to the *New Republic* (October 26). Peres has been holding secret meetings with Hussein to agree on a framework for an international conference. But Shamir, continuing the hard line of former Prime Minister Menachem Begin, fears the loss of territory, specifically the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, if the Peres plan is implemented.

Meanwhile, in the homes of widows like Mabel Arad, there is a growing conviction that extremism has been dominant for far too long; it is time, in her words, to "fight the extremists on both sides in order to live together . . . in peace and friendship and without hatred" (*Jerusalem Post*, October 10). She made this comment during a condolence visit from a delegation of Israeli Arabs living in the villages near her kibbutz. In what the *Jerusalem Post* described as an "emo-

tional meeting that brought tears to the eyes of those present," Arad told her visitors that before her husband's death she had been too involved in family life to devote her time and energies to promoting the cause of peace. But now, "for the sake of our children, Jews and Arabs," she wants to work for coexistence between the two ethnic communities.

It is against the background of such grass-roots sentiment that the Peres plan makes such good sense. What most observers describe as an impossible conflict between conflicting claims to the same land has kept Israel in a state of continued warfare since its inception in 1947. Palestinians, living under occupation in contested lands, refuse to accept the status quo. Hence the outbursts of violence from both sides.

Peres, who previously served as prime minister under the coalition government's rotation system, has consistently fought for a solution that would allow Palestinians some autonomy in the West Bank and Gaza. U.S. government support for the Peres plan has been lukewarm, so in advance of the Shultz visit Peres sought backing from American Jewish leaders, hoping that their moral force would strengthen his hand both at home and in dealing with Shultz. Both the influential American Jewish Congress and the Union of American Hebrew Congregations have swung behind the Peres effort.

BUT AT LEAST one major American Jewish leader, Morris Abram, chairman of the Conference of Presidents of Major Jewish Organizations, told Peres he did not think it appropriate for American Jews to become involved in internal Israeli affairs. In response to Peres's request for Abrams and other American Jews to become engaged in the debate over the proposed peace con-

EDITORIAL COMMENT

ference, Abrams said: "We recognize that the security of the State of Israel is ultimately a matter to be decided by the Israeli people and their government, for they pay for their security with their blood and their fears. We fervently hope Israelis will find the modalities and the program for peace and security through their democratic processes. . . . We therefore will await the decision of the democratically constituted government of Israel on the issue of an international peace conference."

These were words Shamir wanted to hear. He had earlier attacked Peres for seeking American Jewish participation in internal Israeli politics. In a letter to Abrams, Shamir described Peres's appeal as "a regrettable attempt to breach the understanding . . . that matters of existence and security must be left to those who are called to shed their blood for the country."

Peres's call for American Jewish involvement came during an appearance before the Conference of Presidents of Major Jewish Organizations. Responding to a questioner who asked him about the American Jewish Congress's endorsement of his peace plan, he said that

American Jews have the right to express their views on Middle East issues, even if they disagree with Israeli leaders. Noting that there is a difference of opinion in Israel over his peace plan, Peres said, "I don't see any reason why one should be afraid to express an opinion or listen to it."

American Jews have a deep emotional attachment to the state of Israel, and since its creation have provided it with financial support. The effectiveness of the so-called Jewish lobby in Washington is also well documented. Peres wants that same intense concern on the part of American Jews to extend to a debate over decisions being reached by current Israeli leadership, while Shamir feels that American Jews should leave such matters entirely up to the Israelis. Shamir, in his letter to Abrams, called Peres's request for American involvement a "dangerous precedent."

The real danger, however, lies in Americans of any religious persuasion believing that violence in Israel and the Occupied Territories is something to be solved only by those who live there. Peres's view is correct. He doesn't want Americans to control Israeli politics; he only wants Americans to be involved in the lives of the people who are faced with violent death at highway intersections because elected officials have failed to find a peaceful resolution to the region's tensions. Peres's proposal for an international peace conference is a first step toward such a resolution. It should be supported.

James M. Wall.

Vanity of Vanities

THE CONTROVERSY flared up, turned nasty, went national and died—all within a week in October. The issue was whether Maryland's Motor Vehicle Administration should let God—or to be precise GOD—remain on state license plates. During the week of controversy, neither church nor state appeared very intelligent.

Unlike many states that offer vanity license plates, Maryland has not automatically banned GOD from the possible combinations of letters. While it is unlikely that anyone could get GODDAMN from the MVA, one couple managed to get ASK GOD and GOD IS for their two vehicles. It was the latter formulation, according to the MVA, that someone recently complained about.

Maryland authorities have been jittery about such complaints ever since the Supreme Court outlawed compulsory school prayer. The MVA notified the holder of this vanity plate that it was being recalled. Some cautious bureaucrat didn't want to wind up as a defendant in a church-and-state case. The MVA's stance was that since GOD is offensive to some citizens, and since 13 other states don't allow GOD on license plates, it was recalling all GOD plates.

It's only logical that the people who pay extra to have a license plate saying GOD IS would belong to a church that considers conspicuous witnessing important. The story of the agency's action quickly reached a Baltimore newspaper, and from there it made national news. Phone calls of support came in to the couple and their church. Negative phone calls came in to the MVA. As the number of calls began to mount and politicians began to rumble, the MVA backed down.

WAS THIS a victory for Christianity? Though there are those who consider it such, it was more likely a victory for free speech. Now that the state has reaffirmed its position that there's nothing wrong with confessing God's existence on a license plate, it dare not disallow GODAINT, GODISNT, NO GOD or GOHEROD.

In the course of the whole matter the state had three points at which it might have served the average Christian layperson well, and it erred at all three. The first was years ago when the first request for GOD IS came in. If the name of God is sacred, how can anyone put it on a license plate that can get dented, obscured with

SPEAKING OUT

mud or stolen? Perhaps a GOD IS license plate is more offensive to believers than it is to atheists.

The second error occurred when the complaint came in. If it came by phone, the proper answer was simply "Thank you." If it came by letter, why even bother to acknowledge it? The state of Maryland gets complaints every day from citizens. Many are shrugged off or ignored. If the MVA had done the normal nothing about this complaint, no newspaper would have picked up on it.

Having announced its intention to withdraw all GOD plates, the state erred a third time by backing down. This move invited every driver in the state to try his or her hand at creative seven-space witnessing. As a Christian, I feel no sudden sense of rapport when I see a license plate or bumper sticker praising God. I went for years thinking PTL was much the same as STP. The first Christians risked a lot more than a dented bumper to confess Christ. There is something about making an egocentric profession via a license plate that cheapens those many early martyrdoms.

So whom should I support? I believe in God, I confess Christ as savior, and I am certain that the Holy Spirit moves among us daily. But I stick with the three letters and three numbers the state of Maryland assigns me. The Lord in whom I believe is somewhere above a Mustang's bumper. But I can't imagine why anyone would complain about a license plate that says GOD IS. At the same time, getting such a license plate in the first place seems to me like the case of the Pharisee telling God how much better he is than that publican over there. A curse, pox and plague on both houses? Why not? After all, it's all vanity.

H. H. Morris.

Kenneth Slack: Gifted Writer and Churchman

EDITING BRITISH CORRESPONDENT Ken Slack's reports was always more than an encounter with an inspiring natural stylist; it was also an occasion for the delightful discovery of some new "Britishism," which the staff would savor and then ponder in terms of its potential for recognition or understanding by our reading audience. Occasionally we removed one that seemed so "foreign" as to engender only confusion, but generally we left them as they were—small, intriguing snippets of that other culture into which Dr. Slack helped us so skillfully to peer (for an example, note the phrase "others of his kidney" in his piece below).

In our August 12-19 issue we announced that Ken had resigned his position of five years; he was suffering from an illness that had already left him without the use of his hands—the rather beefy hands that one might not associate with the gift for writing obvious in every one of the pieces he dashed off without apparent labor.

Kenneth Slack died on October 5. He was eulogized in the British newspapers, the *Times* of London observing, for example, in its item headlined "A Great Free Church Communicator" that "he was outstanding among the second generation of leaders of the modern ecumenical movement." A Presbyterian, Slack, noted the *Times*, also "understood the Church of England better than some of its own members and at one time was said to be a more frequent visitor to Lambeth Palace than many bishops."

Tribute was also paid by the *Daily Telegraph*: "He had all the gifts necessary for church leadership—a large, though not domineering presence, outgoing friendliness, vigour, good humour, power of preaching and leading of worship, a head for business and constitution making, and a sound grasp of theology and ability to interpret and communicate Christian truth."

Most of us on the staff did not know Ken Slack personally, separated as we were by physical distance. However, as with all extraordinary writers, we felt that we came to know him well through his recorded words.

In a poignant piece written on the occasion of Harold Macmillan's death, Slack described the aged statesman thus: "... as he approached 90, he startlingly departed from his rigorous refusal of traditional honors and exceedingly belatedly accepted the earldom that can be claimed by a former prime minister. He almost mischievously took his title [as earl of Stockton] from a far-from salubrious northern industrial town. . . .

"The past two years we've had the joy of seeing the almost-blind Grand Old Man leaning on his sticks and holding the House of Lords spellbound as he gently but remorselessly pokes fun at Thatcherite conservatism."

Ken enjoyed the same type of gentle humor at the expense of anything or anyone suggesting pomposity. As

an example of his humor, and of his engaging writing in general, we are here excerpting one of the pieces we particularly like (from the November 5, 1986, issue). As Ken Slack wrote of Macmillan, quoting Macbeth, "He should have died hereafter." ■

Keeping the Church for 'Young Fogies'

LIKE THE United States, Britain is experiencing a strong swing rightwards by a good number of intellectuals. When discussing these new, trendy right-wing types, we usually call them "young fogies," which is different from the longstanding epithet "old fogy" only in age, not ideas. All that is new, all that represents change, any disturbance of the established order is distasteful to the young fogy.

If such people are to be religious, they must be religious in a thoroughly traditional way. Down through the centuries, England has been kindly in providing just that opportunity: ancient parish churches nestling at the hearts of villages, a liturgy shaped centuries ago and hallowed by constant repetition, and the Scriptures in the incomparable English of the Shakespearean era.

But, alas, for the godly young fogies! When they go to their parish churches—especially if they are in the country—they may have to carry out research to discover when there is a service that week, for no longer is there a leisured and learned cleric living in the adjoining vicarage (which has probably been sold to a tycoon or a retired general), but a priest shared by four parishes whipping round them frenetically Sunday by Sunday at varied times. Urban young fogies may find that their erstwhile parish church, declared redundant, has been closed, so they must journey a mile down the road.

Once inside the sanctuary, both rural and urban young fogy may find that the Scriptures are read not from the great King James Version ("Authorized Version," we quaintly call it over here, though no one ever authorized it), but from the New English Bible. For this change, the truly intellectual churchgoer nurses an invincible contempt, despising it as a concession to what the great bishop Hensley Henson called the modern "lust for intelligibility." Nor does the worshiping young fogy escape from modernity outside the lessons. The entire liturgy will almost certainly be drawn from the Alternative Service Book, with Cranmer's work left to gather dust at the back of the church.

[The young fogies are well represented by the three conservative authors—Charles Moore, A. N. Wilson and Gavin Stamp—of the recent book *The Church in Crisis*.] There are deeply culpable villains portrayed in *The Church in Crisis*—as there always are when conspiracy

theories flourish. Poor Robert Runcie is one (he is treated shamefully), and even his once-removed predecessor, Michael Ramsey, is accused of "centralisation and modernism." (If there was an archbishop whose whole appearance should have satisfied the young fogey, I would have sworn that it would have been Lord Ramsey. But though he looked medieval, his penetrating mind and spirit delivered him from irrelevant nostalgia.)

The chief villains are the members of the General Synod, through which, for the past 16 years or so, the Church of England has sought to govern itself more democratically. The synod's guilt in these authors' eyes is given demonic personification in the secretary-general, Derek Pattinson. One of the authors, A. N. Wilson, goes so far as to say that the clergy are "almost universally ridiculous," and are not the traditional priestly "lovers of souls," but are concerned more with social and political issues. They are much addicted to putting sheaves of duplicated papers in your hands (though, as far as I can make out even from his description, the papers seem chiefly to be intended to avoid interrupting worship by announcing coming events).

The simple fact is that these authors—and a fair number of others of their kidney—are interested neither in the deep issues of faith today nor in the practical challenges that the church faces. For them, traditional ways will cope with all the challenges thrown up by an ever increasingly secularized world. Give them Cranmer, the King James Version and a replica of a 19th-century clergyman, and the church's mission will be swiftly accomplished.

And don't bother about some thousands of churches that are no longer attended by any but a microscopic number. Keep them in pristine condition, preserve every structure of any architectural importance at all, and restore the resident clergyman to every parish. What money shall we use for all this? Our intellectual friends are above such squalid questions. . . .

Kenneth Slack.

Saints of Common Place

GROWING UP Methodist in southern Indiana does not give one early exposure to the observance of All Saints' Day. The special day celebrated in my church in mid-autumn was Reformation Sunday. I remember red banners, and sermons laced with anecdotes from Martin Luther's life and at least one swipe at the pope. It probably wouldn't have worked to have celebrated All Saints', with its Romish connotations and all, on the next Sunday—even if John Wesley did consider it a favorite day on the Christian calendar.

So maybe I can be forgiven for preaching All Saints'

sermons that have been, to use my wife's term, lectureous. After all, I had to convince both myself and my congregations that the feast day has some clear biblical underpinnings and is not the concoction of bored medieval censor-slingers at the Vatican. My files reveal two favorite themes. "You're a Saint, Too" declared that the saints include all the faithful and not just those who wrote a book of the New Testament or performed a lot of miracles. I used as supporting Scripture the salutations of Paul's letters in which he addresses as saints even those he will go on to scold, and quoted the Anglican children's hymn "I Sing a Song of the Saints of God" which finds saints even "at shops, or at tea."

I have also liked using the "great cloud of witnesses" theme from Hebrews 12 with the suggestion that, faithfully speaking, our most intimate relationships may not be with our contemporaries but rather with those who in previous ages have shared with us our Christian confession. But holding out All Saints' as the church's Memorial

MEDITATION

Day and reading names of the past year's dead was about as personal an observation as I presented.

After 12 years of consciously observed All Saints' Days I think that finally I can ponder the names and faces of real people in whose bodily presence I once stood. They have, as we used to say, "left the church militant and joined the church triumphant," and they make real for me communion of and with the saints.

It intrigues me to consider who these people are. A few years ago I attended a weeklong worship convocation in Minnesota where the feast of All Saints' was observed at one of the daily services. At one point the congregation was asked to utter spontaneously the names of saints for whose witnesses they were thankful. A predictable litany ensued: Augustine, Wesley, Bonhoeffer, Martin Luther King, Jr. If I attended that service today, I'd mention names like Sylvia and Grandma Ida.

St. Sylvia of Pittsboro was the widow of a minister of strong predestinarian leanings. Frail but vivacious, quick-witted, with eyes that danced like flames and shone like jewels, she would let out her warm and infectious cackle of a laugh at the slightest excuse. But she could be serious, too, as she was the day she phoned and urgently invited me to visit her. "It's very important," she told me. "After years of thinking it over, I want to become a Methodist." At age 78, she had decided that the strict doctrine insisted upon by her denomination of all these years did not square with the God she knew from Scripture, experience and reason.

Anyone who saw St. Sylvia on the day she died a year and a half later could have deduced how she had lived her life. There she was in that fish bowl of a cardiac cubicle, a monitor that may as well have been an hourglass looming over her head. She knew that her family had been called. But neither the tubes, the fatigue nor the knowledge that this day would be her last could ruin it.

There were, after all, memories to share, cards from dear friends to be read, goodbyes more to be felt and kissed than spoken. She would break the tension with her sly jokes and be just plain Sylvia to the end.

I was amazed but not surprised. I expected to be amazed. In two years as her pastor I learned how Sylvia's faith had blossomed and flourished through an avalanche of tragedies, setbacks and illnesses which would have broken others. I saw her live many more days sick than well, but never a day when her heart and mind were not trained on the riches of God's kindness and love. The only cross word she ever had for me came one day when she said I had praised her buoyant spirit overmuch. "If there's anything good in me it's from God," she corrected. She was as loving a person as I ever knew, and ever insistent that the love was God's. Hers was an audacious life, lived in communion with a 1,900-year line of oddballs.

ST. IDA the Sojourner was not my grandmother, nor even a member of my congregation. She was a member's mother, and came from Michigan to visit her daughter for six months every year. I remember the first day she charged into my Thursday morning Bible study with the gait of a woman half her age and with a dog-eared old King James Bible under her arm, freely admitting, no less, that she had been a Free Methodist all her life. And I thought, "Oh boy." I had been convinced that Free Methodists were a contradiction in terms, and I feared I might have difficulty imparting my great biblical wisdom to other members of the class if Grandma Ida tried to force me to strain it through her rigid perspective.

I soon discovered who was rigid and who was not. Ida turned out to be the most open-minded, thoughtful, insightful, faithful, unpretentious, forward-looking human being I ever met. I got a call one night telling me that she had suffered a heart attack, so I went to the hospital for a brief visit. Had she not been in intensive care I would not have known that anything was the matter. She gave me a handshake that took two days' recovery time and wanted to tell me in her usual clear, energetic voice about a new insight that had come to her earlier in the day while she was reading her old King James. It was a good insight, as usual, and she had already figured out how to act on it. I was dazed when upon returning the next morning I learned from the head nurse that Ida had died during the night. I miss Grandma Ida, always reaching forward, seemingly seizing every opportunity to grow in both the understanding and application of her faith. I should have named her Pauline. She would have enjoyed that.

Not that I have already obtained this or am already perfect; but I press on to make it my own, because Christ Jesus has made me his own. Brethren, I do not consider that I have made it my own; but one thing I do, forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus [Phil. 3:12-14].

Like St. Paul, St. Ida had been at it longer than just about anybody, and could have rested on all kinds of laurels. But not a chance! And like Paul, she could have rationalized the perfect excuses for becoming complacent. Yet also like Paul, Ida seemed satisfied in relentless pursuit of a single goal: to be with Christ.

None of the lectionaries include a pericope from Philipians 3 for this feast day, but the call to embrace the continuing struggle of living and growing faithfully in an unfaithful world—in solidarity with past, present and future Christians—does certainly emerge from All Saints'! How important it is to be able to see this call made manifest amid common folk.

I would not for a moment detract from the witnesses of Luther, Bonhoeffer or King. I do suggest that they, with a long line of other widely recognized witnesses, had lots of adrenalin helping them. Surely such comes to those cognizant of being allied with great historical causes. Sts. Sylvia and Ida had no such knowledge. Though God does work through adrenalin, God also works without it. In a world where most of the people I see long for a sense of meaning and the ultimate amid the mundane, the greatest witnesses I can cite on this All Saints' Day are two women whose long plodding, day-in, day-out faith journeys were their lives.

Byron L. Rohrig.

Century Marks

□ **THE LIBERAL PREDICAMENT:** the demographic plight (to use a nice neutral term) of liberal Protestants gets neatly summarized in *American Mainline Religion* (Rutgers University Press), by Wade Clark Roof and William McKinney. The bad news is this: liberal churches—for Roof and McKinney this means Episcopalians, Presbyterians and the United Church of Christ—have low birth rates, aging constituencies and large numbers of nominal members. Surprisingly, liberal churches do better than any others at picking up members who have been disaffected by other churches. Trouble is, Roof and McKinney say, these switchers tend to be older people who aren't very committed to the church anyway. What's worse, liberal churches lose more followers than does any other group to the secular world. Indeed, liberal Protestantism's real competition is "not the conservatives it has *spurned* but the secularists it has *spawned*." Here's rather clear evidence of the liberal identity problem: liberal churches might be attractive for people coming out of more conservative churches, but they don't seem to inspire much loyalty in those who start there. In short, liberals have trouble inculcating a liberal piety. Roof and McKinney hazard a recommendation: don't turn to the theological right, but become "more self-consciously 'liberal,' if by that is meant an assertion of responsible individualism in a communal framework." That sounds OK. But we need a nonsociologist to preach it.

EVENTS AND PEOPLE

Chilstrom Installed

In the view of many who were in attendance, Lutheran liturgy was at its best on October 10 when Herbert W. Chilstrom, formerly bishop of the Minnesota Synod of the Lutheran Church in America (LCA), was installed as bishop of the newly formed 5.3-million-member Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, a merger of the LCA, the American Lutheran Church and the Association of Evangelical Lutheran Churches. Despite a chilling rain, several thousand worshippers gathered at the University of Illinois at Chicago for the event. One end of the auditorium was decorated with flowing red draperies over a temporary chancel; at the opposite end was a huge baptismal font, symbolic of the coming together of the three bodies (water from three containers had been poured into a font at the constituting convention in Columbus, Ohio, last May).

The procession itself—bishops, choirs, clergy, lay leaders, foreign ecclesiastical dignitaries and ecumenical leaders from other church bodies—was led by dancers to the accompaniment of both traditional and contemporary hymns. Interspersing the processional was "The Bishop's Blues," a jazz work composed by Chicagoan Andrew Tecson and played by an ensemble under his direction.

Despite reports of alleged threats by activists from the Denominational Ministry Strategy group in Pittsburgh and by some doctrinal conservatives from the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod to stage a demonstration at the service, there were no disruptions, perhaps thanks to the presence of security guards and Chicago police on the outside.

Christine Grumm, executive director of Education Program Associates in San Jose, California, was installed as vice-president. Her chief responsibility is to chair the ELCA's Church Council, its highest decision-making body except for the convention. Other officers installed were Lowell G. Almen, former editor of the ALC's *Lutheran Standard*, as

secretary of the church, and George E. Aker, formerly president and chairman of the board of Seilon, Inc., in Toledo, Ohio, as treasurer. An ironic note: Grumm is the granddaughter of a now-deceased vice-president of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod, which is not a part of the merger. Her father is an AELC bishop.

The irenic installation sermon, preached by Bishop Donald W. Sjoberg of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada, asked that the new bishop be a pastor to the laity and clergy of the church—a monumental task involving not only the creation of new administrative offices and positions but the weaving together of ethnically diverse people—Norwegians, Germans, Finns, Swedes, Hispanics, Afro-Americans—into a cohesive church. If there was a triumphal note in the service, it was to be found in the joy at the sign-of-peace exchange among all the worshippers: after generations of doctrinal discussions and disagreements, the majority of Lutherans in America could now be brought together in a union based on their confessional writings.

Contract Not Renewed

Elizabeth Bettenhausen, a social ethicist on the faculty of Boston University School of Theology and a prominent feminist theologian, has asked two United Methodist Church bodies to investigate her charges that nonacademic factors were instrumental in the school's decision not to renew her teaching contract beyond 1988. The two bodies are the UMC's Commission on Status and Role of Women and the University Senate, an arm of the Board of Higher Education and Ministry's education division. Boston University School of Theology is one of 13 seminaries supported financially by the denomination.

According to Dr. Bettenhausen, Richard Nesmith, dean of the theology school, cited "inadequate scholarship" when he informed her in August that her contract would not be extended. The administration would not elaborate, she said, adding that "I have no evidence that anyone in the administration has ever read any of my work." She charged that her reputation as a feminist liberation theologian was a primary factor in the school's move. She also speculated that her introduction of a faculty council resolution last November, criticizing the

university's granting of an honorary doctorate to Salvadoran President José Napoleón Duarte, may have finally prompted her firing. The decision came less than a week after the anti-Duarte resolution was made public, along with what Dr. Bettenhausen termed a "very angry response" from Boston University President John Silber in a lengthy letter to the university community.

Kevin Berkey, the university's acting provost, said that the decision not to reappoint Dr. Bettenhausen was part of a "clearly articulated" and regular review of faculty and that there was nothing irregular about her situation. Berkey said that she had brought no complaint directly to the university but had aired her grievances "all through the media." He maintained that because of the confidential nature of the review process, the university would be unable to discuss the "substantive nature" of Dr. Bettenhausen's shortcomings as a professor.

Geneva Dalton, a member of the secretariat of the Commission on Status and Role of Women, said that the agency has agreed to form an inquiry into "allegations of sexism and racism" at the school of theology. Dr. Bettenhausen noted that two other women at the school have brought suit against Boston University, charging sex discrimination: Jean Osborn, the school's registrar, and Carolyn Waller, who works in the school's financial office.

The inquiry will begin in early November.

CWS Chief Endorsed

J. Richard Butler, chief executive of Church World Service, the relief and development agency of the National Council of Churches—under fire from Arie Brouwer, general secretary of the NCC, who claims that Butler does not follow NCC policies—has received the unanimous endorsement of the CWS Unit Committee, composed of staff executives of denominations that contribute to CWS and set its policy.

As William DuVal, a Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) official who sits on the CWS Unit Committee, told Religious News Service, Dr. Brouwer has publicly stated on several occasions recently his intention to fire Butler from CWS if the agency did not "come into line." The controversy over Butler's administration is the latest in a long history of disputes and ambiguities surrounding the relation-

ship of CWS and the NCC. Formed in 1946—three years before the NCC was created—CWS has historically been the council's best-funded division. In the opinion of a number of CWS officials and committee members, Dr. Brouwer's determination to integrate CWS more fully into the NCC—in terms of both its identity and its finances—is at the heart of the friction between the two executives. That tension is not new. Several previous CWS executives have been fired, say longtime observers, for reasons related to the same issues.

Shell Game

Tim Smith, head of the Interfaith Center on Corporate Responsibility (ICCR), has accused the Shell Oil Company of "a devious attempt to use a former church leader to neutralize religious support for the campaign against Shell's alliance with apartheid" in South Africa. Smith made the charge in connection with the ICCR's release of a report titled "Shell Game: Shell Oil's Secret Plan to Counteract the Anti-Apartheid Boycott." The church leader in question is James Armstrong of Denver, former United Methodist bishop and a past president of the National Council of Churches. As a consultant for Pagan (pronounced "Pa-GAHN") International, a Washington public-relations firm that advises corporations that are under fire in connection with social-responsibility issues, Armstrong approached Emilio Castro, head of the World Council of Churches, on behalf of U.S. Shell, a Pagan client.

Because of its operation in South Africa, Shell Oil has been a target of a 12-nation boycott in which 70 U.S.-based organizations, including the ICCR, are taking part. Royal Dutch Shell operates South Africa's largest oil refinery. "Shell U.S. South Africa Strategy," a 264-page document put out by the corporation and obtained by the ICCR, states that "mobilized members of religious communions provide a 'critical mass' of public opinion and economic leverage that should not be taken lightly." It suggests that "church critics and responsible activists" be urged to discuss plans for a post-apartheid South Africa to "deflect their attention away from the boycott and disinvestment efforts."

United Methodist News Service quoted Armstrong as saying that his work for Pagan International on behalf of Shell Oil

is "ethical, above-board and far different from most strategies developed for most clients by most public-affairs firms." "To think that being concerned about the plight of post-apartheid South Africa merely plays into the hands of Botha apologists is dangerously shortsighted," he said, referring to South African Prime Minister P. W. Botha.

Armstrong severed his connection with Pagan on October 1 and returned to Denver as visiting professor at Iliff School of Theology. He is also executive director of the Center for Dialogue and Development, which brings together corporation executives from the First World and ecumenist/activists from the Third World "for dialogue and cooperative action."

Falwell Leaves PTL

Reacting angrily to a decision by federal bankruptcy judge Rufus Reynolds, evangelist Jerry Falwell and his allies have resigned from the board of the PTL ministry. Judge Reynolds ruled that PTL's creditors can file their own proposal for reorganizing the beleaguered ministry and suggested that they could take four of the board's nine seats. Many of those creditors are supporters of the ousted Jim and Tammy Bakker. In Falwell's view, a one-vote majority was not a sufficient guarantee to prevent the return of the Bakkers.

Jim Bakker, who was compelled to leave the multimillion-dollar South Carolina-based religious conglomerate and its television network after admitting to a sexual dalliance with church secretary Jessica Hahn, was described by Falwell as "probably the greatest scab and cancer on the face of Christianity in 2,000 years of church history." Although Bakker may not be able to regain total control of PTL's entire operation, it is possible that he will be able to return to the TV ministry in the near future.

An Apology from Royalty

King Juan Carlos I and Queen Sofia, whose predecessors Ferdinand and Isabella expelled Jews from Spain in 1492, have become the first Spanish monarchs to visit a synagogue. The king and queen visited Temple Tifereth in Los Angeles during their recent two-day stay in that city. In his remarks the king praised Jewish "contributions to letters, science and the arts during the Middle

Ages." That "rich tradition," he said, was lost to Spain when the Jews were expelled. Terming the expulsion "unjust and unnecessary," he told the congregation that "I would like finally to convey to this community the greetings of a Spain which in full conscience assumes responsibility for the negative as well as the positive aspects of its historic past."

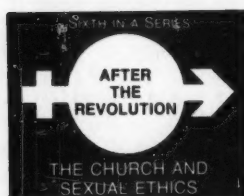
Rabbi Jacob Ott, who leads the synagogue, declared that the occasion "opens up a new era." He also said it was ironic that Spain, at the time a totalitarian state, was one of the few nations during World War II that helped Jews fleeing the Holocaust, even though the 1492 edict was still officially in effect. The expulsion order was not repealed until 1968. In 1985 Spain and Israel established diplomatic relations.

Peace Prize

Costa Rican President Oscar Arias Sánchez, who was instrumental in bringing about the Guatemalan peace accord signed in August by the leaders of five Central American countries, has been awarded the 1987 Nobel Peace Prize. The Norwegian Nobel Committee, meeting in Oslo, called Arias the main architect of the accord and said that he had "made an outstanding contribution to the possible return of stability and peace to a region long torn by strife and war."

An interesting aspect of the award was the fact that Arias was nominated by only one person, Bjorn Molin, a member of the Swedish Parliament. Several Washington observers suggested that the award to Arias is a setback for President Reagan's plans to push for more aid to the contra rebels fighting against the Nicaraguan government. President Reagan had told the Organization of American States that the Arias peace plan was "fatally flawed" because it did not address itself to U.S. concerns about Soviet involvement in Central America.

In the meantime, Archbishop Arturo Rivera y Damas of El Salvador, on a visit to the United States, voiced hope that the peace efforts by the presidents of Central America's five nations "will be supported by the president of the United States." The prelate warned that failure of the peace plan could bring about "catastrophic consequences" for all of Central America; if no solution is reached at the regional level, he said, "war may be unavoidable."



Sexual and Family Violence: A Growing Issue for the Churches

LOIS GEHR LIVEZEY

THE PROBLEM OF sexual and family violence is at least as old as Lot's offer of his daughters to the men of Sodom, an offer all the more grievous because it was made in the name of the ethic of hospitality to strangers and sojourners: "Behold, I have two daughters who have not known man; let me bring them out to you, and do to them as you please; only do nothing to these men, for they have come under the shelter of my roof" (Gen. 19:8). Lot, however, is remembered in Christian tradition as the "righteous" Lot (II Peter 2:7); his act of giving his daughters to violence and violation goes unnoticed. The betrayal of intimates and the conspiracy of silence so commonly bound together in sexual and family violence are also features of this biblical story.

In the intervening centuries theologians have only occasionally addressed issues of sexual assault or domestic abuse. In *The City of God* Augustine did write on the meaning of rape, which had become an issue for the church with the rape of Christian women during the sack of Rome in 410, and he begins his discussion with the apt judgment that responsibility for rape belongs to the rapist, not the raped. But all too quickly Augustine's perverse version of the hermeneutics of suspicion becomes clear: he suggests that women may experience rape with pleasure, and that such women may be getting what they deserve. In facing the perennial question of why this crime is inflicted on Christian women, he opines:

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Some most flagrant and wicked desires are allowed free play at present by the secret judgment of God . . . Moreover, it is possible that those Christian women, who are unconscious of any undue pride on account of their virtuous chastity, whereby they sinlessly suffered the violence of their captors, had yet some lurking infirmity which might have betrayed them into a proud and contemptuous bearing, had they not been subjected to the humiliation that befell them in the taking of the city [Whitney J. Oates, editor, *Basic Writings of Saint Augustine*, vol. 2 (Random House, 1948), p. 35].

Clearly, Augustine's doctrine of sin—with its inextricable mix of sex and lust—and his doctrine of divine providence lead him into speculations that are unhinged from the experience of rape and invidious to the women violated.

John Calvin wrote the following words to a battered woman seeking his counsel:

We have a special sympathy for poor women who are evilly and roughly treated by their husbands, because of the roughness and cruelty of the tyranny and captivity which is their lot. We do not find ourselves permitted by the Word of God, however, to advise a woman to leave her husband, except by force of necessity; and we do not understand this force to be operative when a husband behaves roughly and uses threats to his wife, nor even when he beats her, but when there is imminent peril to her life . . . [W]e . . . exhort her to bear with patience the cross which God has seen fit to place upon her; and meanwhile not to deviate from the duty which she has before God to please her husband, but to be faithful whatever happens ["Letter From Calvin to an Unknown Woman," June 4, 1559, *Calvini Opera*, XVII, col. 539, in P. E. Hughes, editor, *The Register of*

the Company of Pastors of Geneva in the Time of Calvin (Eerdmans, 1966), pp. 344-345].

In this brief letter, the familiar but devastating themes in pastoral responses to battered women are given classical expression. Violence and "tyranny" at home are women's "lot," a fate to be suffered rather than a problem to be solved. Indeed, Calvin, like Augustine before him and countless others since, seems compelled to explain violence against women by appealing ultimately to the will of God. The inviolability of the institution of marriage justifies a deaf ear and a blind eye to the violation of a woman's body and spirit through torture and terror. Only the clear and present danger of death legitimates the separation of batterer and battered—and Calvin does not seem to regard the ever-present life-threatening potential of such violence very seriously. He takes for granted the subordination and servanthood of women in family relations. Calvin stops short of justifying wife- and child-beating in the name of patriarchal duty and discipline, but his message is clear: the Christian duty of a battered wife is not to oppose violence and violation but to endure it and, further, to please her batterer husband.

In Christian Scripture and tradition, then, we find an ethic of care for strangers that renders precarious the protection of daughters; an ethic of chastity—laden with innuendos of pleasure, lust and pride—that renders precarious the moral standing and human rights of women; and an ethic of Christian duty that renders precarious the basic safety of wives. Our theological heritage is an accomplice to sexual violence and violation.

For the most part, the complicity of the churches and their theologians in sexual violence is a complicity of silence. We have simply crossed to the other side of the road, in the dubious tradition of the religious leaders in the parable of the Good Samaritan. Even today, when issues of sexual violence receive considerable media attention, surveys and studies indicate that the majority of ministers and seminary students know almost nothing about the dynamics of sexual and family violence and have little or no experience in dealing with it.

Breaking the Silence: The Feminist Revolution. The sexual revolution, which effected a new, more positive valuation of the bodily and sexual character of our humanity, ought also to have affirmed the inviolability of the body (as of the conscience) and respect for the physical integrity of every human being. But the sexual revolution has not been a revolution against coercive sexuality. Indeed, some studies indicate that rape is increasing, and that over 50 per cent of male high school and college students view coercive sex as acceptable behavior (Diane Russell, *Sexual Exploitation: Rape, Child Sexual Abuse, and Workplace Harassment* [Sage Publications, 1984], pp. 62-65). Nor has the sexual revolution been a revolution for equality in male-female relations. Sexual violence is primarily a problem of violence against women and girls. Until we challenge the status of women

as men's servants and subordinates at home and at work, assault, harassment and abuse will continue.

It is the feminist, not the sexual, revolution that has effectively broken the silence about sexual and family violence, transforming the private hells into a public issue amenable to shared concern, public discourse and common action. The feminist revolution has insisted on the distinction between coercion and consent in sexual relations. It has insisted on equality between women and men, and on justice for women regarding access to basic needs, the means of sustaining a livelihood and the decision-making processes that organize and regulate the common life.

The dramatic emergence of sexual and domestic violence as a public issue testifies to the power of breaking the silence. In June 1974, a *Ms.* magazine article described the founding of a battered women's shelter near London. Within the next decade 500 battered women's shelters were established in the United States. Society has acknowledged that "family violence" includes not only spouse abuse but the abuse of children by parents and other relatives, sibling abuse and the abuse of elderly parents by their adult children. The abuses covered by the term family violence illustrate the problem of defining the issue. Some definitions of family violence limit it to physical assault that causes or intends to cause physical pain and injury, but others include verbal abuse, threats of violence and other actions causing mental or psychological harm. More recently, definitions of family



The churches' silence
about sexual violence
is an act of complicity.

violence have incorporated coercive sexual relations, including the sexual abuse of children by family members, and also marital rape. Definitions of domestic abuse may include neglect, especially in relation to children and the elderly, and financial abuse, a prominent issue in the relations of adult children to their aging parents. What connects these various forms of abuse is the element of coercion or nonconsent; the violation of bodily integrity and well being; and the betrayal of covenantal relationships.

In the past ten or 15 years many states have revised rape laws to encompass male as well as female victims, marital rape, acts of sexual coercion not involving intercourse and assaults in which there is no instance of resistance or physical harm. Some procedures for prosecuting rape have also been changed. Columnist Ellen Goodman illustrates the changed attitude by summarizing several recent rape cases with the phrase: "If she says no, then it's rape." Beyond and behind the legal change, a reinterpretation of the nature of rape has occurred. We have learned that sexual assault and harassment are exercises of power and control or anger, not expressions of sexual need, interest or pleasure. Testimony by sex

offenders corroborates victims' reports that rape is a life-threatening experience.

IN JUNE 1986, the Supreme Court declared that the sexual harassment of women in the workforce constitutes discrimination on the basis of sex and is therefore illegal under Title VII of the Civil Rights Act. Until the mid-1970s, sexual harassment was basically a matter of jokes and cartoons ad nauseam, and the courts had ruled that such unwelcome sexual advances—even when they culminated in the termination of a woman's job—were a "personal" matter, not a question of discrimination. Working women know better. Of 9,000 women responding to a *Redbook* magazine questionnaire in 1976, 88 per cent had experienced sexual harassment at work. Studies of female United Nations employees, U.S. government employees, and students have all revealed substantial rates of sexual harassment. This harassment is also cited frequently as a cause of stress among women in the workforce, and a reason for job changes. In one study 20 per cent of the women questioned had left a job because of harassment (Barbara Chester, "Sexual Harassment: Victim Responses," *Sexual Assault and Abuse: A Handbook for Clergy and Religious Professionals*, edited by Mary D. Pellauer et al. [Harper & Row, 1987], p. 161).

Underreporting, the limited and nonrandom character of most surveys, and the problem of definition make reliable statistics on sexual and family violence difficult to establish. But even the most cautious estimates indicate far higher rates of abuse than previously imagined. It is clear that violence against women and violence within families is commonplace, and that the perpetrators and the victims of such violence are ordinary people. Some call it the most democratic violence in America: it is a serious problem among all classes and races of the population.

Murray Straus's studies suggest that marital violence occurs in one out of four marriages, not as a single event but as a pattern (Richard J. Gelles and Claire Pedrick Cornell, *Intimate Violence in Families* [Sage Publications, 1985], p. 69). The Center for the Prevention of Sexual and Domestic Violence estimates that one girl out of three and one boy out of seven are sexually abused by age 18, and that in half the cases their abusers are family members; that 1 million children are physically abused by parents or caretakers every year; and that 1 million elderly people are abused every year by their adult children. In Diane Russell's study of rape, 44 per cent of the women interviewed had been subjected to rape or attempted rape, and contrary to the prevalent stereotype, strangers accounted for only 11 per cent of the perpetrators. Her work also indicated that rape rates are rising: in every age group the rape rates are significantly higher than for the same age group in any earlier period (e.g., for women under 20, the rape rate increased from 11 per cent in 1931 to 36 per cent in 1976).

Women's stories of sexual violence are stories of ter-

ror and torture. We are only beginning to recognize what experiences of sexual violence mean in women's lives. Indeed, we scarcely have a language or a theory to deal with the short- and long-term effects too long neglected by the care-giving community and by the victims themselves. The studies done on "rape trauma syndrome" are an example of the research needed in the field. Investigations of the intergenerational effects of family violence are another significant contribution.

Breaking the Silence: The Churches' Response. Breaking the silence is a fitting task for churches and church members. We know the power of the Word in our own lives, and we are called to witness to the good news of the gospel, the gracious love of God for us revealed in Jesus Christ. And it makes a difference. Pastors attest to the impact of mentioning the problem of sexual and



Violence is destructive of the freedom requisite to being human.

family violence in a sermon or a prayer, or posting information about a rape crisis center or a battered women's shelter on a bulletin board or mentioning it in a newsletter.

Churches are beginning to respond, especially by educating people through congregational programs and outreach support for communitywide care-giving services. Some concrete examples will illustrate various possibilities in this direction, and perhaps encourage thought and action about what more can and should be done by religious institutions. Seattle's Center for the Prevention of Sexual and Domestic Violence deserves special mention for its decade of pioneering work on family violence with Protestant, Roman Catholic and Jewish congregations and organizations. Directed by Marie Fortune, a pastor and author of *Sexual Violence, The Unmentionable Sin: An Ethical and Pastoral Perspective* (Pilgrim Press, 1983), the Center has developed resources for congregational study and action, including a study guide for teen-agers on preventing sexual abuse, a monograph on violence against women of color, and a manual for congregational use in discovering and developing community resources on family violence. CPSDV has also initiated national conferences on family violence and theological education.

Denominational judicatories are beginning to generate their own resources. For example, the Council on Women and the Church of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) has developed a packet of materials on family violence for local church use, "A Time to Speak," and also a pamphlet and filmstrip on sexual harassment, *Naming the Unnamed: Sexual Harassment in the Church*. The Division for Parish Resources of the Lutheran Church in America has included several brochures on family

violence in its family-resource series; these resources are valuable for families affected by abuse as well as for congregational study. The Office of Ministries with Women and Families in Crisis of the United Methodist Church has also been engaged with this issue. A 1981 church-wide survey revealed sexual and family violence to be a serious problem within the church. Since then the church has followed two avenues of action: developing resources for the education of members, and supporting model ministries—such as The Refuge in Erie, Pennsylvania, a church-sponsored shelter.

Theological education is a critical dimension of educating the churches. Few seminaries provide courses on sexual and family violence. At best, some reference may be made to the issue in a pastoral counseling course—usually within the narrow bounds of crisis counseling or therapeutic intervention. But even sensitive and responsive crisis counseling requires an understanding of the social dimensions of family and sexual violence. If ministers are to be prepared for pastoral counseling and congregational consciousness-raising, the curriculum must include specific and multidisciplinary attention to these issues.

In seminaries as in churches, breaking the silence has a powerful impact on the community itself: student organizations sponsor films and speakers on the topic; campus incidents are addressed rather than denied; field-education placements in shelters are developed, or a session on sexual harassment is provided for field-education supervisors; resources on these issues are added to the library, and continuing-education programs are developed. Thus, even a very modest institutionalization of this issue in theological education provides legitimacy and resources to those addressing the problems, and a space for healing, thinking, talking and acting together.

Some churches are involved in community services, especially emergency-care services: crisis counseling centers, battered women's shelters and other housing for homeless women and young people—many of whom are running away from physical and sexual abuse. Long-term housing for homeless women and their children is also a critical need, one often ignored by churches' outreach missions because the homeless men on the streets of downtown areas are more visible. Ministers and laypersons should get to know the community's resources for responding to and preventing family and sexual violence: What programs and services exist? What is their perspective on or interpretation of the sexual and family violence with which they deal? What are their policies and procedures?

COOPERATION between religious organizations and community services is especially important, for women who are battered or raped ask religious questions. Womanspace, a shelter for battered women in Mercer County, New Jersey, has a chaplain and is developing a training program for clergy and laypeople. Another cooperative venture—this one statewide—is Volunteer

Emergency Foster Care of Virginia, which trains families and administers emergency foster care for children who are abused, neglected, homeless or who have run away from home. This program is a joint effort of the Virginia Council of Churches, the state's Department of Social Services and Department of Corrections, and community, religious and professional childcare workers in local communities throughout the state.

Churches also must develop their capacities for informed and effective advocacy before the legislatures and the legal system. Innovative and vigorous support is needed for a greatly expanded network of community services for the abuser as well as the abused. Laws are needed to establish adequate legal protection from sexual assault and abuse at home and work.

Last but not least, Christian theology must provide a firmer foundation for care and justice, for standing against sexual and family violence, for healing the violated and for changing society's values and structures. Our education, service and advocacy depend upon the adequacy of our theological vision—the way we interpret Scripture and tradition regarding relations between women and men, sex, marriage, parenting and violence. In this adventure of faith and thought, the victims of violence and violation can offer valuable guidance. We need to listen to their stories with an ear for the religious reflections that sustain capacities to survive, to heal and to flourish. A careful and respectful attention to the voices of the violated may also encourage the reconstruction of our theologies, as the experiences and interpretations of sexual violence cast new light on old theological symbols and doctrines.

Ending violence and violation must be a presupposition of pastoral counseling and congregational service and support activities. In the past, a preoccupation with keeping the family together at any cost has contributed to the churches' complicity in violence against women. But if the conditions of trust and communication so critical to viable, meaningful and stable family life are to be created and nurtured, violence must be stopped. Here, too, we are led to theological and ethical reflection, and a reconsideration of what it means to be human in the presence of God.

All violence—and certainly sexual violence—is destructive of essential human capacities and distinctive human purposes. It is obviously physically destructive of victims' bodies and, indeed, of their lives. The seriousness of this destruction must be emphasized in view of the devaluation of bodies, especially women's bodies, in traditional Christianity. Ironically, Christian orthodoxy affirms that the integral relation of body and spirit is what makes us human. Thus, sexual violence is always also existentially and spiritually destructive. It threatens self-respect and mutual trust, giving rise to feelings of powerlessness, helplessness, humiliation, worthlessness, mistrust and even self-blame.

Violence is also destructive of the freedom requisite to being and becoming human. Essential human capacities

for thought and action; conscience, consent, and choice; communication and association, worship and discipleship can be realized only in freedom. Violence against women or children paralyzes thought and so threatens capacity to deliberate on a course of action or to imagine alternative futures. It mutes speech and so perpetuates the conspiracy of silence that has left victims without recourse to help and healing—or justice.

Humans are distinctive in their capacity to create, sustain, transform—and destroy—community, both interpersonal and political. Violence, whatever else it does, categorically repudiates mutuality and equal participation in decisions affecting intimate and family relations. It denies to victims their citizenship in the family or in the society at large. It is not uncommon for a man who batters his wife also to forbid her to associate with others, whether for friendship, enjoyment or politics. Independent forms of association are ruthlessly suppressed, as they are in all types of tyrannies.

Humankind is created for rejoicing. The Shorter Catechism of the Presbyterian Church begins with the question: What is the chief end of humankind? The answer is: To glorify God, and to enjoy God forever. But in the face of violence, joy gives way to terror. We should not trivialize this violation of human purpose. As Christians who declare that human life is life lived in the presence of God, we must speak boldly against the violence that reduces life to a matter of survival. The psalmist was wiser: "May those who sow in tears reap with shouts of joy!" (Ps. 126).

Christian theology does not lack grounds upon which to stand against sexual violence and violation. Shalom is the vision of a society without violence or fear: "I

will give you peace in the land . . . and none shall make you afraid" (Lev. 26:6). No violence! No fear! In a society as violent as ours, a commitment to nonviolence, in interpersonal as well as international relations, is a radical commitment. But shalom means that, and more. Commentaries on the concept speak of a profound and comprehensive sort of well-being: "abundant welfare," with its connotations of justice and the common good. In *Until Justice and Peace Embrace*, Nicholas Wolterstorff argues that shalom also means harmonious and responsible relationship with God, other human beings and nature. In the city of shalom, duty gives way to delight.

Shalom is one angle of vision on opposing sexual violence, but it is not the only one. A doctrine of creation that gives theological justification to human rights; the history of exodus and covenant; the ministry of Jesus Christ; the ethic of care for the stranger; and the stories of women in the Bible are all fruitful resources for liturgies of healing and for the work of securing justice. Each of us must explore our own traditions with an ear for victims' stories and an eye on ending violence.

"May God keep you safe until the word of your life is fully spoken." Margaret Fuller's words of blessing remind us what sexual violence destroys and what the struggle for peace and justice means. It is time to break the silence on sexual and family abuse—a silence that still haunts churches and schools of theological education even as these very issues are front-page news. Our silence will not protect us; it is life-threatening, and it is unfaithful to our commission. Let us speak the word of our lives, the gospel of our faith. Let us speak truth to power for the sake of the survival of some and justice for all. ■

John Bennett on Oxford '37

DAVID McCREARY

THE 1937 OXFORD Conference "Church, Community, and State" of the Life and Work movement brought together many representatives of the ecumenical community. In the shadow of Nazism, it addressed the churches with words of hope and courage regarding social witness. Its concerns—war, racism and economic strife—have proved enduring, and many of its declarations were surprisingly modern. The conference formed an ecumenical consensus for a

common social witness that has remained durable in the face of more recent motifs: revolutionary change, liberation and the nuclear threat.

John C. Bennett is one of the few Oxford Conference participants who is still living. Then a young seminary professor of theology, he had a considerable role in the conference's preparation and was a secretary of one of its sections. Looking back over the conference and Christian social thought since then, Bennett regards the Oxford Conference as a milestone in the church's development concerning its social mission. Recently I discussed with Bennett the confer-

ence's implications for the church today.

"The Oxford Conference absorbed some of the most important theological changes since the 1925 conference of Life and Work in Stockholm," Bennett said. "It responded to important theological developments associated with Karl Barth and Reinhold Niebuhr. Niebuhr was the major American voice at the conference in terms of theological thought, and his speech had a tremendous impact. While his theology was far removed from Barth's, who did not attend, his ideas reflected, to a considerable extent, the theological changes that had taken place in Europe since Stockholm.

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"Second, Oxford faced the new problems created by the National Socialist regime in Germany: problems of church and state; church and race; and, by anticipation, church and war.

"Third, Oxford faced the continuing dilemmas of the universal church existing in the world and took a step in clarifying Christian thinking about war and its diagnosis of the degrees of international anarchy.

"For instance, the church and war report recognized that there is no one Christian position on the subject. Second, it gave pacifism a surer status in the

The conference seemed more concerned with the church's social mission than with church union.

mainline churches. It described war in terms that would put a heavy burden of proof on any claim that a particular war is justified. For example, the conference said: 'War involves compulsory enmity, diabolical outrage against human personality, and a wanton distortion of the truth. War is a particular demonstration of the power of sin in the world and a defiance of the righteousness of God as revealed in Jesus Christ and him crucified.' Yet the conference accepted the idea that criteria exist by which some wars can be regarded as just: to defend international law, or to vindicate 'an essential Christian principle' such as the defense of 'victims of wanton aggression.' We did not emphasize then, as we would now, the idea that the escalation of the destructiveness of the means used, as in the case of nuclear war, would make a war unjust. In this respect ours is a different world.

"Fourth, Oxford projected an ethic for the economic order—without discussing revolutionary changes—that is still relevant to Christian thinking in the industrial democracies. In fact, the normative elements of the American Catholic bishops' recent letter on the economy are very similar to the conference's report. Ideas about property and equality, poverty and unemployment, and the whole challenge to a prevailing view of what I call 'the almost moral self-sufficiency' of the free-enterprise system are similar in both documents. Interestingly, it seems we haven't moved so far from Oxford on those positions in the industrialized democracies."

I noted that much has been written on the church's relationship to the state, at least as far back as Constantine, but little has concerned economic ethics. Bennett agreed in part, saying, "Traditionally, much thought has focused on the possession and use of property, on usury, and on a just wage or price, but the industrial revolution got ahead of the churches. They were not ready to deal with the forms of injustice that it created until late in the 19th century. The American Social Gospel and parallels in Britain, France, the Scandinavian countries, and in the Roman Catholic Church since Pope Leo XIII's famous social encyclical *Rerum Novarum*, began a new stage of Christian economic ethics, strongly reflected by the 1925 Stockholm Conference. The Oxford Conference gathered these threads together very well in the light of current theological criticism."

Bennett told me that the conference, while ecumenical, lacked a broad constituency. He said that only 30 people from the Third World, many of whom were missionaries from the West, attended. Because of Hitler's restrictions, no one represented the major German churches. The conference consisted chiefly of Anglo-Saxon North American and European delegates, and only 19 women attended. There were no Catholic observers, but 26 Orthodox were there. It was a limited group. Oxford did not represent the whole world, however, because of parallel ecumenical conferences held in the late 1930s.

MEETING in 1937, the conference took place in the context of militant nationalism—in Germany, Italy, Spain. I asked Bennett how the gathering responded to this increasingly tense atmosphere.

"While frequently criticizing totalitarianism, which was connected with nationalism and racism, it did not mention particular nations, except in the letter to the Christians in Germany. The Geneva headquarters of the Life and Work Institute pressured the conference not to identify itself closely with any one particular section of the German church. But in fact the delegates did ally themselves with the Confessing Church associated with Martin Niemöller and Dietrich Bonhoeffer. Obviously, the prospect of war was very much on the delegates' minds, and no one saw a prospect of improvement in the German situation."

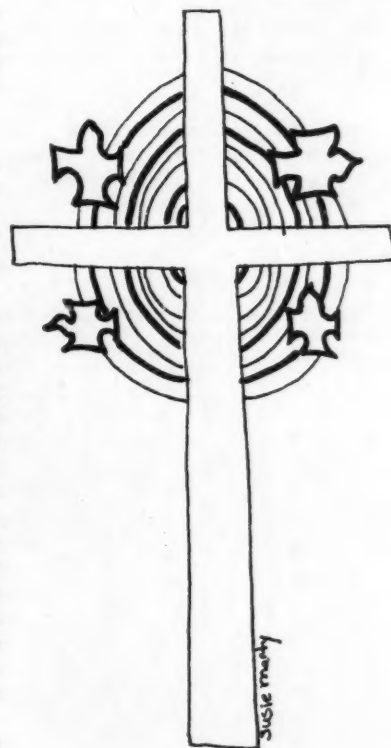
The Oxford Conference is well known

for the phrase: "Let the church be the church," a central issue at the meeting. Church freedom or the freedom of the church from narrow cultural norms, Bennett explained, was understood in a new light.

"Not only was Oxford for many a more significant embodiment of the universal church than they had previously experienced, but it also confronted them with both theological and ethical thinking about the church, which transcends nations. Not used in a triumphalist sense, the admonition was an emphasis on the church's freedom from the power of states and the pressures of the culture. It called upon the church to be true to itself as it was understood at Oxford."

The conference seemed more concerned about the church's present social mission than it was about uniting churches doctrinally and organically. Bennett indicated that this emphasis was created partly by the division of labor between the Faith and Order and the Life and Work movements. (Faith and Order had its own conference in Edinburgh that same summer.)

"The Faith and Order movement had paid special attention to those areas of doctrine involving the ministry, apostolic succession and the sacraments, which



were primary obstacles to full organic union and Christian unity. Oxford did not deal with Faith and Order issues of that time. Since then, Faith and Order has broadened its concerns and under the World Council of Churches has had common projects with Church and Society."

I asked Bennett if prewar optimistic Americans clashed with pessimistic Europeans at the conference. He was careful to point out that the British stood in between their American and continental colleagues. For example, he noted, "I remember Archbishop William Temple telling me about his first meeting with Reinhold Niebuhr. He said, 'You are the man who's been troubling me.' The whole British approach was based much more on continuities of church and society that was that of continental Christians. On the other hand, the British had a greater sense of tradition and more theological sophistication than did the Americans. But at Oxford the Americans did not strongly resist some of the influences which came from Emil Brunner and the other Europeans. For instance, the economic order report presented a very un-American view of the economy, yet the Americans barely protested."

A PROMINENT American layperson at Oxford was John Foster Dulles. He participated in the international order section, called the Universal Church and the World of Nations. Bennett told me that the conference's critical approach to social thought changed Dulles. "He became interested in the church again. His father was a minister and theologian, so Dulles came out of the church. But I don't think he was very active in it until after the Oxford Conference. He was deeply impressed by the difference between a religious and a secular international conference, by the greater possibility at the former of generating truly international understanding.

"But Dulles changed in the 1950s. I once read a thesis that quite correctly shows that the Dulles of the '40s, who was head of the Federal Council of Churches' Commission on a Just and Durable Peace, was different from the Dulles of the '50s as U.S. secretary of state. He was not particularly anticommunist in the '40s, but about 1950 he became preoccupied with the cold war. When the Soviet Union got a nuclear bomb, Dulles shared the widespread fear of the results. I worked with him quite closely during the '40s, and his commis-



sion was well balanced, having a good many pacifists and liberals on it." His leadership at that time was generally accepted by the commission.

Reinhold Niebuhr was the other American at Oxford who proved to be very influential in politics. But his stance on communism, as Bennett pointed out, was quite different from Dulles's. "Niebuhr thought communism was idolatrous religion," Bennett noted. He often suggested that the communists of the late '30s and '40s, because they had this commitment to communism as a kind of religion, were even more dangerous than the fascists. It was in 1953 that Niebuhr published his strongest statement against communism. His stroke came in 1952, and after that he did not have the strength to develop a new systematic position. But he did give many signals that his mind was changing, beginning as early as 1958. And later, he opposed the U.S.'s Cuba policy, our China policy, and the Vietnam war, and he even changed his mind on his own earlier anticommunist rhetoric. He did not have the opportunity to develop a position that was as strongly and indeed as polemically expressed as had been his anticommunist position of the '40s and early '50s.

"Neoconservatives are dead wrong in claiming that Niebuhr's anticommunist stance defines 'Christian realism.' Great changes have taken place in international communism and even in Soviet communism. Nuclear war is a much greater threat to freedom today—as well as to existence. Realists must take account of these new situations. I think that neo-

conservatives are also wrong about economic issues. Niebuhr did reject socialism, but I doubt if he would have shared their celebration of capitalism or their tendency to see free enterprise as almost morally self-sufficient. I do not want to attribute ideas to Niebuhr, but I think that he would be as horrified as I am by the combination of wealth and poverty under American capitalism. While Niebuhr never advocated any scheme that imposes complete equality, he thought of justice as being under the criticism of equality."

Much Christian thought, on both the Catholic and Protestant sides, has been devoted to a theocratic ideal. But the Oxford Conference moved away from this pattern of thought.

"It saw clearly the contrast between the state, with its coercive power, and the church—and the importance of the freedom of the church against the state, especially where the state tries to control it," Bennett said. "Nor was there any emphasis on a dualistic interpretation of the 'two realms' doctrine, for which the Kingdom of God is irrelevant to the political order. The delegates were against identifying any political order with the Kingdom of God, but they left room for seeing signs of the Kingdom, even partial embodiments of it, in history. In studying the conference in a fresh way, I realize how important it was that they put community before state in the title. The totalitarian state does not distinguish between the community and the state.

"In a democracy, Caesar is the people, expressed in all kinds of different ways politically. And the people who are members of the church are, in a way, also members of Caesar. As Christian citizens, they cannot separate their ethics altogether from their responsibility as citizens. However, they may be driven sometimes to emphasize the lesser evil so much that their decision may become remote from the Christian ethic, even though they don't intend that result."

It has been 50 years since the Oxford Conference. I asked Bennett how it has personally shaped his life and thought. "It is part of the background for what many of us think now, for it has entered into the background rather than being a source of new ideas today. For a person who enters into it now, it is partly out of a historical interest. But things we take as self-evident today were not self-evident then. The conference formed my mind." ■

BOOKS

Television and Religion: The Shaping of Faith, Values, and Culture.

By William F. Fore. Augsburg, 219 pp., \$11.95 paperback.

The electronic evangelists have had a hard time this year. They have been shaken by declining revenues, exposés of sexual hanky-panky, and government investigations. It would not be surprising if William F. Fore, head of communications for the National Council of Churches, had written a scathing analysis of the troubles of the religious television empires. However, to his credit, his concern goes deeper. He wants to examine the historic tension between the worlds of broadcasting and religion, offer a theological underpinning for his analysis, and explain how television is beginning "to usurp a role which until recently has been the role of the church in our society, namely to shape our system of values, embody our faith, and express our cultural essence"—a shift he finds ominous.

Fore begins with a study of the world of television and ends by outlining a Christian strategy for combating and even reconstructing American television. The chapters dealing with the electronic church and its audience are eye-opening, and devastating in their implications. He describes five generations of electronic-church programming, beginning with Billy Graham, who used television and sophisticated advertising techniques. Oral Roberts brought cameras into his services, and then Rex Humbard made his entire service a TV production. The fourth generation emerged with Pat Robertson's "700 Club," which imitated Johnny Carson's "Tonight Show." The enormous success of the former encouraged Robertson to begin the next venture in electronic-church programming: thanks to huge contributions from viewers, he put together a network feeding some 5,500 cable systems nationwide.

Though the figures for the electronic-church audience are staggering, Fore points out that the audience for the top-rated programs peaked in 1977, and every evangelist has since lost viewers.

Jerry Falwell may once have boasted about an audience of 25 million, but surveys indicate he has no more than 1.4 million viewers today. Even though audiences are not as large as the evangelists claim, according to Fore the electronic-church programs have been "the embodiment of the conservative religious revival which has been a part of every Great Awakening thus far in America."

What do these electronic evangelists preach? Among a variety of detailed studies Fore cites *Prime-time Preachers: The Rising Power of Televangelism*, by Jeffrey Hadden and Charles Swann, who identify three central themes: the alleviation of guilt; the power of positive thinking; and the assurance that human selfishness, properly viewed, is not a sin. Other studies show that the evangelists emanate authority at a time when authority in our society is in disarray. Theologically, Fore points out, the electronic church's message illustrates the two great disruptions that have dogged Christian tradition from the beginning: the heresy of Manichaeism, which separates everything into good and evil, and of Pelagianism, which denies original sin and promises earthly rewards for believers—a view that "fits nicely into the electronic church's emphasis on the individual."

Fore assembles an astonishing array of financial statistics of income and expenditures by the electronic evangelists. Fund-raising is a central activity of these evangelists, and no wonder. Their expenses are huge, and they live in plush homes, drive Mercedes-Benz cars and have their own private planes. Evangelist Jimmy Swaggart says that in 1982 he spent \$38 million—more than 80 per cent of his \$45 million income—just keeping his program on the air. His luxurious headquarters in Louisiana rival the headquarters of many secular corporations.

Fore concludes that the electronic church is great show business, but that its net impact on religious life is harmful. The electronic church separates people from their own communities and "already has substituted itself for many of the things we used to do communally . . . The community of the church, the local church, is central to Christian faith and life." Fore insists that "the electronic church is not good evangelism," and that it has become captive to the commercial system and its demands.

Fore urges mainline churches to ignore the glitter of the electronic church and to begin working cooperatively on local

programming. His study should encourage the church to re-examine its methods of communicating the gospel to a generation captivated by television.

Alfred P. Klausler.

Public and Private High Schools: The Impact of Communities.

By James S. Coleman and Thomas Hoffer. Basic Books, 254 pp., \$24.95.

For more than 20 years the research on schools conducted by James Coleman and his associates has sparked lively debates. Their 1982 book, *High School Achievement*, encouraged those who argue that parochial and private schools do a better job of educating students than do public schools. Its findings seemed to support their advocacy of educational vouchers at the state level, and tuition tax credits at both the state and national levels. Their opponents, in turn, dismissed the findings as insubstantial or misleading.

Public and Private High Schools amplifies and refines the analysis offered in the 1982 volume. More important, it provides an insightful portrayal of two orientations to schooling. Public-education advocates, the authors say, see schools as instruments of society, while private-education supporters see them as agents of the family, charged with reinforcing its values. Public schools, typically lacking a set of dominant community values to uphold, must balance competing sets of values. Private schools, on the other hand, represent communities held together by common values.

With these distinctions in mind, Coleman and Hoffer analyze vast quantities of data on school effectiveness. Weighing variables, guarding against statistical distortion, qualifying their judgments, plotting graphs (24 of them) and constructing tables (82 altogether), they move gingerly toward answering important questions. Among those they ask are: Who chooses which schools? What are the effects on school performance of family background, structures, functions and aspirations? How do school expenditures, size and programs affect outcomes? What does participation in extracurricular activities and parental involvement in school functions contribute to school effectiveness? What can be learned by studying dropout and transfer rates and success after graduation? And most important, how does coming from a disadvantaged family (marked by low levels of education and low income) or

a "deficient" family (characterized by single-parent households and working mothers, as well as self-interested parents and decreased parental involvement with children) affect the accomplishments of children and schools?

The conclusions the authors draw are worth knowing, although some may seem obvious: that "the differences in economic resources of the schools are less important than the difference in social resources—the functional or value communities that reinforce the demands made by the schools" (p. 68); and that Catholic schools achieve success with less advantaged students from deficient families because the greater academic demands they make are supported by the shared values of the functional community.

However, in the concluding chapter, "Schools, Families, and Communities," Coleman and Hoffer offer a judgment that makes this a significant book. They explore the importance of "social capital," that is, the elements in society that nurture the development of human capital. For the purposes of their study, they define social capital as the difference

that parents and the community can make in educational achievement. Children today, they argue, are adversely affected by the weakening of families and by their increasing separation from their families as a result of their psychic involvement with the mass media (with MTV, the continuous rock video cable station, being the most extreme expression of those media). The goals of schools become increasingly difficult to attain as the social base that supports them becomes less important in the lives of children and youth.

Coleman and Hoffer's exploration leads them to conclude reluctantly that while freedom of choice in schooling should not be restricted, increasing families' opportunities to exercise choice by means of educational vouchers and tuition tax credits may destroy some of the remaining social capital that can still be found in residential neighborhoods. Policies that allow individual advantages to be gained only with extensive consequences for others must, they say, be pursued with great caution.

Those who would be informed participants in the debate on public and private schools would do well to read this book.

Myron A. Marty.

Self-Fulfilling Prophecy: Exile and Return in the History of Judaism.

By Jacob Neusner. Beacon, 230 pp., \$25.00.

Jacob Neusner, university professor and Ungerlied distinguished scholar of Judaic studies at Brown University, is well known as the author of over 100 books on Judaism; in this volume, he provides the foundation for a comprehensive history of it. Unlike most histories, which focus on political-historical events, major thinkers, literary works, socio-religious movements, etc., in an effort to present Judaism as a constantly evolving but nevertheless unified continuum, Neusner focuses on it as a religious system which produced—and continues to produce—a variety of Judaisms throughout history. His major thesis is that these Judaisms create Jews' worlds, in contrast to the prevailing opinion that religion is defined by extrinsic factors (psychological, economic, political). "In the case of Judaism religion imparted its pattern upon the social world of the Jews" (pp. 3-4). In short, religion defines society, society does not define religion.

According to Neusner, the history of Judaism begins with the destruction of the Temple and the Babylonian exile of 586 B.C.E. and the return of some of the exiles in the time of Nehemiah and Ezra about 450 B.C.E. Though not all Jews of that time participated in these events, principles derived from the Pentateuch and prophetic and historical writings were nevertheless employed to apply the experience of exile and return to all of Israel, in an attempt to explain its significance.

Thus, the loss of land was seen as a divine act of punishment for sin, and the restoration was seen as a divine act of reconciliation for atonement. By creating this paradigm of alienation and reconciliation, Judaism perpetually renewed the resentment of exile but also held out the hope of return. This paradigm gave Judaism its unique sense of national identity. Because this pattern corresponded to the experience of the Jews in subsequent centuries, the paradigm of exile and return constituted the basic structure of Judaism. Neusner uses this pattern to explain how throughout history Jews created various movements that enabled them to establish a sense of identity and to cope with a generally unsympathetic environment.

The book provides a credible explanation of why Judaism survived in Muslim-dominated territories, whereas Christianity, which did not incorporate the pattern of exile and return as the basis of its self-identity, did not. However, it does not always take sufficient account of extrinsic factors, such as the affinities between Karaite Judaism and Shi'ite Islam or the influence of Muslim philosophy on Jewish rationalism and mysticism, which subsequently played roles in the emergence of modern Reform, neo-orthodoxy and Zionism. Nevertheless, this is an original and groundbreaking study which should serve as the basis for a more comprehensive work.

Marvin A. Sweeney.

Reviewers

Alfred P. Klausler is a Century editor at large. Myron A. Marty is dean of the college of arts and sciences at Drake University in Des Moines, Iowa. Marvin A. Sweeney is assistant professor of religious studies at the University of Miami in Coral Gables, Florida.

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RECENT ARRIVALS

Democracy and the Renewal of Public Education. Edited by Richard John Neuhaus. Eerdmans, 170 pp., \$9.95 paperback.

This book reports (Tracy Early, reporter) on what must have been a lively conference on what is wrong with the teaching of values in public education and how to set it right. Paul C. Vitz's paper condenses his book-length critique of religionless school texts. The other four contributors pretty well agree that American schools, in the name of pluralism, do not do justice to pluralism; fearful of establishing majority religious viewpoints, schools converge on secularistic approaches that mask privileged but unexamined religious commitments. Some of the participants speak of disestablishment or dismantling through tax vouchers or other means of creating choice, or of creating "magnet schools" that allow

a kind of religious local option to break up governmental monopoly. While the participants represent only one part of the spectrum of current critics, they have a coherent vision and successfully set forth terms for other interested parties to address.

God, Goods, and the Common Good: Eleven Perspectives on Economic Justice in Dialog with the Roman Catholic Bishops' Pastoral Letter. Edited by Charles P. Lutz. Augsburg, 172 pp., \$9.95 paperback.

The Roman Catholic bishops hoped that many citizens would take up the challenge of their letter on economics. Many critical—often right-wing—Catholics did. Here, 11 friendlier Lutherans mull over that pastoral letter, criticize it, apply it to their areas of life, and bring their experiences to debate on its themes. There's no party line. Robert Benne gives two cheers for the bishops, but is cautious. Sibusiso M. Bengu wonders whether capitalism is reformable. Others raise voices for farmers, the poor, and native peoples; the range of political and economic positions is broad. Representative Lutherans may not share only one opinion about these subjects—but they do seem to share a spirit of engagement and concern.

American Catholic Religious Thought. Edited by Patrick W. Carey. Paulist, 302 pp., \$10.95 paperback.

American Catholicism has a great history, but not many have paid attention to it. Carey hopes to help change that with this textbook, designed for use in Catholic colleges and parishes, we presume, but useful far beyond that sphere. He selected writings of major Catholics from John England to John Courtney Murray; converts Orestes A. Brownson and Isaac Hecker are among the cast. Carey provides helpful introductions and then lets the writers speak for themselves, which they do well enough.

Politics, Power and the Church: The Catholic Crisis and Its Challenge to American Pluralism. By Lawrence Lader. Macmillan, 273 pp., \$22.95.

Lader concludes that "it could be too easily assumed that this book is slanted against the Catholic church. Admittedly, when the church and fundamentalists have transgressed the crucial 'wall of separation' between church and state, I have been harsh indeed. Still, I hope I have been objective in presenting facts and interpreting them." This kind of old-fashioned book is redolent, in milder ways,

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of Paul Blanshard's classic attacks on Catholic power. But Lader introduces two new factors. First, Catholicism links with fundamentalism on causes uncongenial to Lader. And there is a radical Catholicism which would ally with Lader and company, against the other Catholics and fundamentalists. The historical chunks here are abrupt and superficial. Lader is too ready to shout "transgression of the wall of separation." Often the Catholics and fundamentalists do perfectly legal things that are best fended off by other perfectly legal religionists who organize to oppose them. This is a handy guide to the radical Catholic-secular observers' view of what to be worried about in pluralist America.

Truth Is Symphonic: Aspects of Christian Pluralism. By Hans Urs von Balthasar. Ignatius, 192 pp., \$9.95, paperback.

Hans Urs von Balthasar suffers from (or enjoys) identification with Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger and other German conservatives whom the Vatican favors these days. But this is miscasting, for he has no enforcer mentality, no need to exclude those his sweet reason has not yet convinced. Von Balthasar, now in his 80s, has gone his own way for years, convincingly writing a theology that does justice to

the aesthetic dimension. Here the very metaphor for truth comes from the world of aesthetics. A benign view of pluralism shines through here, but the particularity of Catholic belief is never obscured.

LETTERS

History and Justice

AFTER READING Daniella Ashkenazy's article "History and the Body Politic in Israel" (Sept. 30), I happened to turn to Glenn D. Earley's letter criticizing Rosemary Radford Ruether's July 1-8 article on Palestine and found that my frustrations were rising quickly to the boiling point. It is utterly astounding that a country whose historical consciousness is as vividly alive as Ashkenazy suggests could continue to inflict

injustice on a whole people, the Palestinians. It seems to me that Israel should be an expert in knowing why it is wrong to oppress a people. Earley claims that Israel has a moral and historical right to exist. That claim is not beyond questioning, especially if that right to exist necessitates the continued oppression of the Palestinians.

Earley asks Ruether and the readers of *The Christian Century* to consider whether the Jews should not have "mastered the gun" in their conflict with Palestine. Ruether's suggestion that the Palestinians recognize Israel's existence de facto remains the best response to Earley's question, which recalls history but doesn't make good use of historical consciousness. Israel did "master the gun." Will Israel also master justice? Will this modern nation make use of its historical consciousness so that the delightful Friday evening discussions of which Ashkenazy writes not only feed the hunger for historical consciousness but also quench the thirst for justice, especially of the Palestinian people?

Michael E. Tassler.

Peace Lutheran Church,
Gahanna, Ohio.

Justice's Injustice

GLENN A. HEWITT deserves a standing ovation for his courageous statement on affirmative action ("Victimized by Justice," Sept. 23). He has given eloquent voice to the silent pain of hundreds of scholars who are hurt by it, yet who may also agree with it in theory.

My problem is not with the theory of affirmative action, but with its implementation. First of all, U.S. law allows for a woman or a member of a minority group who rates a 7 on a scale of qualification to be hired preferentially over a male who rates an 8. But what about when a woman or a minority person who rates a 2, 3 or 4 is hired over a white male who rates a 7, 8 or 9? Such extreme forms of reverse discrimination are not only illegal, but are shortsighted—folly that will soon degrade A- and B-level institutions to C and D levels.

The intention of affirmative action to ameliorate obvious injustices is being borne disproportionately by one generation. Is it just that this generation should atone for the sins of others? To date, I know of no professors from the discriminating generations who, in order to make room for minorities and women, have



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resigned as an act of moral protest over the prejudicial context out of which their own careers were launched in the '50s, '60s and '70s.

I wish that these delicate questions of justice could be discussed openly without damaging the careers of those who dare to raise them. For this reason, I withhold my name from this letter, for as one also exceptionally well qualified to teach religion and called by God to this ministry, but who is a white male, I do not wish to jeopardize what meager chances I may have of someday seeing that dream fulfilled.

[name withheld by request].

Glenn A. Hewitt's thought-provoking essay is somewhat mistitled. I say mistitled because the piece emphasizes not the alleged cost to him—a Protestant white male—of affirmative action (though he certainly does not minimize this), but rather his admirable determination to "recommit myself to opposing discrimination."

The body of Hewitt's essay does convey rather strongly the idea that—as he writes—"affirmative action is working." Alas, during the Reagan years this has not been true; this administration's policy has been to undercut affirmative action.

The result, especially in the case of blacks, is stark. In the 1980s, for example, Harvard University's number of black freshmen fell by about one-third compared with the preceding decade; at the University of Michigan, black enrollment fell from 7.7 per cent to 5.2 per cent. Of the 2,200 tenured and tenure-track professors at Michigan in the 1970s, 73 were black; now 63 are black. Of Princeton University's staff of 647 faculty members, just seven are black. Universities such as Stanford and the

University of California at Berkeley have faculties whose black members come to about 2 per cent.

Black-student enrollment at the college level has been falling steadily throughout the present decade; it was down to 9.6 per cent as of 1982 (the last year tallied by the U.S. Department of Education)—and that figure included enrollment at predominantly black colleges!

Affirmative action is not (now) work-

ing, because the federal government abandoned it. Our nation needs an anti-racist and enlightened social policy. With this, affirmative action—a vital part of such a policy—would work (as it did between 1965 and 1975) and educational, health and housing facilities would be greatly expanded. This would ensure decent employment to Hewitt and millions of others scandalously deprived in this nation, abounding as it is with natural

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resources and human skills—and in justice.

Herbert Aptheker.

San Jose, Calif.

I want to thank Glenn Hewitt for his essay, a personal reflection on the flip side of affirmative-action policies. He vividly portrays what I have been teaching in my parish for some time: sexism and racism—or any kind of discrimination—hurt everyone eventually. Discrimination separates us from each other, from ourselves and from God. That is how sin works. Even our positive efforts toward eliminating present and future discrimination hurt us as we seek a way through the pain we have caused one another.

I, too, long for the day when women and men in church and society are able to seek work equally and fairly—a day when gifts and skills are scrutinized more carefully than gender, race or age. Until that day, we suffer together: those who have known the anguish of discrimination all their lives and those who, because of efforts toward justice, know that pain

now for the first time. Suffering together does not make unemployment or underemployment go away. But it can draw us back from our own narrow interests to a broader interest in justice and the well-being of all persons, to a vision of the Kingdom Coming. Our pain can perhaps give us ears to hear creation still groaning in travail—and the willingness to work and pray for a better society.

Lynne Anne Silva.

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In response to Glenn A. Hewitt's editorial, I would say that affirmative action is not about college or seminary faculty appointees. It is not about their wives or families.

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M.E.M.O

The Classics

THESE ARE good days for classics.

Take the matter of dolls. On a recent foray to California I read some of the best news yet in this good year for *Schadenfreudlichkeit*—the enjoyable sin of enjoying others' misfortunes. I learned that a California couple was losing \$30,000-\$50,000 on a doll they advertised but never produced. Intending to exploit the minute-and-a-half-long passion called Olliemanian, they promoted a Barbie-sized doll representing Colonel Oliver North. They expected a half-million orders and millions in profits. After several months they found, as I recall, 32 takers, not enough to warrant production. People preferred the classics themselves, Ken and Barbie.

I also read in a San Francisco paper a story by Michael Kernan about efforts by the Gruelle family in Washington to preserve the integrity of Raggedy Ann. The Gruelles had read of the Macmillan publishing company's plan to replace the passé versions of Ms. R.A. "Raggedy Ann and Raggedy Andy need YOUR help." The Gruelles are the heirs of Johnny Gruelle (d. 1938), who invented Ms. R. Ann and Mr. R. Andy. Admittedly, the Gruelles have a heavy investment in the classic, since they market it. But one empathizes on aesthetic and sentimental grounds with their resistance to Macmillan's attempt "to make [Ann] more viable, to keep up with the times." Later, gazing fondly at the five Raggedys that foster daughter Fran lovingly made for her brother and four foster brothers a generation ago, I resolved to write this column in revenge against Macmillan Modernists.

It's not necessary here to detail the battle in England to take all the "lippity-lippity" lines about Peter Rabbit's feet from the revised editions. In the Modernizers' version, we hear no "scr-r-ritch, scratch" from Mr. McGregor's hoe, and no Petrine "Kertyschool!" all because vandalizing editors think children today cannot catch or do not want such words. (If there are any such, make them spend eternity with an Oliver North Doll or a Revised Raggedy Ann.) In the face of such a development, we can find defenders of the classic rising to a Holy Cause. I ran up stairs, looked at the Beatrix Potter drawings on which we and our children grew up, and had to peer through tears.

Still, one can communicate through the viably new. Though I am one who instinctively prays in King James Version English, and will cite Scripture in those 1611 archaisms in this life and sing praises in such language in the life to come, I have never joined forces with the aesthetes who think that contact with God is dependent upon archaic language.

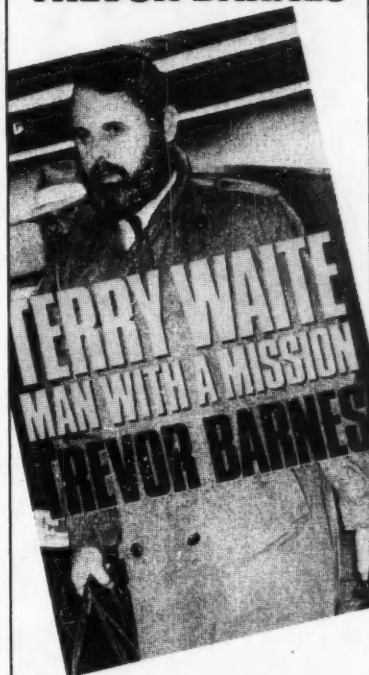
Admittedly, no RSV or NEB or any of the other alphabet soupy disrupters of that classic will make such a profound contribution to language and lore. Admittedly, the archaism does connote one approach to sacrality. But when I read those who say that revised and communicative modern versions will drive people away from faith, from the Word, I wonder.

Down the block are burgeoning, bustling, studying, praying, praising fundamentalist-pentecostalist-evangelical churches that have jettisoned the KJV (through which, 40 years ago, many of the congregants' parents were saying only God could speak or God could speak only) and are using nonclassic translations. These somehow achieve their effect. In fact, the scholars tell me, if they are "vulgar," so was the New Testament Greek, which is officially called "vulgar" (*koine*).

So I will let them tamper with the Book of Common Prayer and the Bible. But not with Raggedy Ann or Peter Rabbit. They're too sacred.

Martin E. Marty.

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